Journal of Management Studies and Development
Vol. 5, No. 01, pp. 148-167
journal.iistr.org/index.php/JMSD
DOI: 10.56741/IISTR.jmsd.001936

Ethical Perceptions of Generation Z on Duped Products

The Role of Intellectual Property Awareness

[1]Rolando B. Magat, Jr.*, [1]Arahvela Dungog, [1]Laurence A. Castillo, [1]Alyssa Kyla V. Cimacio, [1]Ronafel C. De Los Reyes

Corresponding Author: * rolandomagat1018@gmail.com

[1] University of Perpetual Help Dalta System, Las Piñas City, Metro Manila, Philippines

ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received 25 December 2025
Revised 4 February 2026
Accepted 13 February 2026

ABSTRACT

The increasing prevalence of dupe products has raised ethical concerns, particularly among Generation Z, whose consumption behavior is shaped by affordability, social influence, and evolving moral standards. While prior studies have examined ethical consumption and intellectual property (IP) awareness separately, limited research explains how consumer-related factors translate into ethical perceptions through IP awareness. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the ethical perceptions of Generation Z toward duped products by examining the relationships among consumer-related influencing factors, IP awareness, and ethical perceptions within a mediated framework. Employing a quantitative, descriptive–correlational design, data were collected from 400 Generation Z respondents in Metro Manila using a validated, researcher-made questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, non-parametric correlation, and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with bootstrapping. The findings reveal that consumer-related influencing factors significantly affect ethical perceptions both directly and indirectly through IP awareness, confirming a partial mediation effect. Although Generation Z demonstrates general awareness of IP rights and acknowledges ethical concerns, economic practicality and social normalization continue to shape ethical judgments. Anchored on Behavioral Reasoning Theory and Cognitive Dissonance Theory, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of ethically ambiguous consumption by highlighting how awareness interacts with consumer reasoning processes. The findings have implications for IP education, ethical marketing, and policy initiatives aimed at promoting responsible consumption. The study concludes

that strengthening IP awareness alone is insufficient; ethical interventions must also address the economic and social contexts influencing Generation Z. Future research is recommended to explore longitudinal effects and cross-cultural perspectives on ethical consumption of dupe products.

Keywords
Business Ethics
Duped Products
Ethical Perceptions
Generation Z
Intellectual Property

This is an open-access article under the CC–BY-SA license.

Introduction

The contemporary consumer marketplace is undergoing a profound transformation, driven largely by younger generations whose purchasing decisions are shaped by digital platforms, value sensitivity, and evolving ethical norms. Within marketing management, these changes pose significant challenges as firms navigate the competing demands of affordability, brand differentiation, and ethical accountability. One phenomenon that captures these tensions is the growing consumption of *dupe products*—low-cost alternatives designed to closely resemble branded goods—particularly among Generation Z consumers [1]. While dupes are often marketed as legal substitutes rather than counterfeits, their proliferation raises important questions concerning intellectual property (IP) awareness, moral judgment, and consumer ethics.

The increasing normalization of dupe products has implications that extend beyond price competition and consumer choice. From a business ethics perspective, dupe consumption occupies an ambiguous space between legitimate market competition and the erosion of brand equity and creative ownership. Generation Z—commonly defined as individuals born between the late 1990s and early 2010s—has emerged as a dominant consumer cohort whose purchasing power and cultural influence are expected to intensify in the coming decade [2], [3]. Understanding how this generation evaluates the ethical dimensions of dupe consumption is therefore critical for brand strategists, policymakers, and intellectual property advocates, given the potential consequences for innovation incentives, brand trust, and regulatory effectiveness [4].

Prior research presents a persistent paradox in Generation Z's consumption behavior. On one hand, this cohort is frequently characterized as ethically conscious, emphasizing sustainability, transparency, and social responsibility in consumption choices [5], [6]. On the other hand, empirical and industry evidence consistently indicate high levels of dupe purchasing among the same demographic, driven primarily by affordability, accessibility, and

trend alignment [7], [8]. Social media platforms intensify this contradiction by actively promoting dupes through influencer endorsements and peer-to-peer recommendations, framing them as savvy, budget-friendly alternatives rather than ethically questionable imitations [9], [10]. As a result, ethical considerations related to IP protection are often minimized or reframed within digital consumption narratives.

Despite expanding scholarship on ethical consumption and counterfeit goods, research specifically addressing *dupe products* remains conceptually underdeveloped. Much of the existing literature focuses on counterfeits and piracy, which involve clear legal violations, rather than on dupes that operate within more ambiguous ethical and legal boundaries [11], [12]. This distinction is particularly important, as consumers may rationalize dupe purchases differently from counterfeit consumption, perceiving them as ethically permissible despite their close resemblance to protected designs. Moreover, localized studies suggest that in price-sensitive markets, ethical considerations are frequently subordinated to economic practicality, further complicating assessments of IP awareness among young consumers [13].

The ethical framing of dupe consumption is further shaped by digitally mediated environments. Influencer-driven marketing and algorithmic content circulation frequently normalize imitation by emphasizing cost savings and aesthetic equivalence, thereby reducing perceived moral risk [14], [15]. These dynamics highlight the need to examine not only consumer behavior but also the cognitive and ethical reasoning processes that underpin purchasing decisions in social media–driven contexts.

A critical limitation in the existing literature lies in the measurement and conceptualization of intellectual property awareness. Many studies rely on generalized ethical frameworks that do not adequately capture how Generation Z interprets IP rights within fast-paced digital marketplaces [16], [17]. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of quantitative research examining the direct relationship between IP awareness and ethical judgment in the specific context of duped products. As a result, questions remain regarding the extent to which Generation Z understands the broader economic, creative, and legal implications of dupe consumption [18], [19].

Addressing these gaps, the study investigates the ethical perceptions of Generation Z toward duped products, with particular emphasis on intellectual property awareness as a mediator between consumer-related influencing factors and ethical perceptions. By empirically examining this relationship, the study contributes to marketing ethics and consumer behavior literature by clarifying the ethical boundaries of dupe consumption and offering insights relevant to brand management, policy formulation, and IP education initiatives in digitally driven consumer markets.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) and Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) to explain how Generation Z consumers in Metro Manila form ethical perceptions of duped products in relation to intellectual property awareness. BRT elucidates how IP awareness, moral beliefs, and perceived social expectations function as cognitive reasons that shape ethical judgments and attitudes toward dupe consumption. These factors collectively explain how Generation Z evaluates the ethical acceptability of purchasing dupe products, particularly when considerations of affordability and accessibility are present.

CDT complements this framework by accounting for the psychological tension that arises when ethical awareness conflicts with actual purchasing behavior. In the context of dupe products, CDT explains how Generation Z consumers may rationalize or justify dupe consumption despite recognizing IP-related ethical concerns. By integrating BRT and CDT, the framework clarifies how intellectual property awareness, moral reasoning, and dissonance-reduction strategies interact to shape ethical perceptions and consumer decision-making. This integrated perspective directly supports the study's objective of examining the role of IP awareness in shaping ethical evaluations of dupe products among Generation Z.

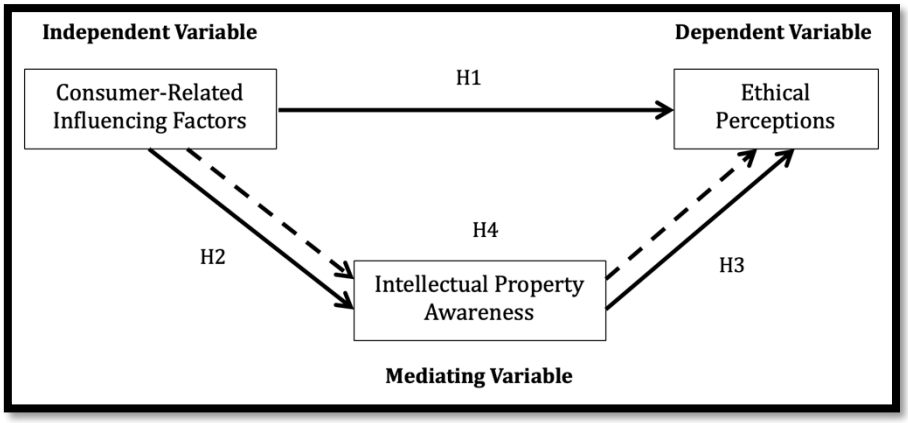


Fig. 1. The operational conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual framework of this study, as shown in Figure 1, explains how consumer-related influencing factors shape the ethical perceptions of Generation Z consumers in Metro Manila toward duped products through intellectual property (IP) awareness. Grounded in Behavioral Reasoning Theory, consumer-related factors—such as personal moral values, perceived economic value and accessibility, and social and cultural influences—serve as the primary sources of reasoning that shape individuals' awareness and understanding of IP rights. Intellectual property awareness, in turn, functions as a mediating cognitive mechanism that translates these consumer-driven considerations into ethical evaluations, influencing moral reasoning, perceptions of harm to original creators, and ethical decision-making. At the same

time, Cognitive Dissonance Theory explains how Generation Z consumers manage inconsistencies between heightened IP awareness and continued dupe consumption, particularly when affordability and social normalization encourage rationalization of ethically ambiguous behavior. Within this framework, IP awareness mediates the relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and ethical perceptions, offering a nuanced explanation of how ethical judgments toward duped products are formed in contexts where economic practicality and social influences coexist with ethical and legal considerations. Based on this conceptual framework, the study advances the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and the ethical perceptions of Generation Z concerning duped products.
2. There is no significant relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and intellectual property awareness of Generation Z regarding dupe products.
3. There is no significant relationship between intellectual property awareness and the ethical perceptions of Generation Z concerning duped products.
4. Intellectual property awareness has no mediating effect on the relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and the ethical perceptions of Generation Z concerning duped products.

Materials and Methods

A. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive–correlational research design through a survey method to examine the level of intellectual property awareness among Generation Z consumers in Metro Manila and its relationship with their ethical perceptions of duped products. This design was appropriate as it enabled the systematic description of existing conditions and the statistical examination of relationships between variables without manipulation.

B. Sampling Technique Used

The study employed a multi-stage cluster sampling technique to systematically select respondents from Metro Manila. In the first stage, clustering was based on geographical location, limiting the population to Generation Z individuals residing in Metro Manila. The second stage involved clustering by age group, focusing on respondents aged 18–24, consistent with the operational definition of Generation Z adopted in this study. In the third stage, respondents were further clustered according to consumer experience, specifically those who currently use or have previously used dupe products. Inclusion criteria required respondents to meet all three conditions, while individuals who did not belong to the specified age group, resided outside Metro Manila, or had no experience with dupe products were excluded. To determine an adequate sample size, a power analysis using G*Power software was conducted,

with parameters set at a medium effect size (0.15) and a statistical power of 0.80, consistent with recommendations for studies employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) [20]. The analysis indicated a minimum required sample size of 343 respondents; however, a total of 400 Generation Z consumers participated during the data collection period, thereby exceeding the minimum requirement and enhancing the robustness of the statistical analysis.

C. Study's Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents shown in Table 1 indicates that the study successfully captured a diverse yet representative sample of Generation Z consumers (n = 400).

Table 1. Respondents' demographic profile (n = 400)

Profile	Category	n	%
Age	18-20 years old	103	25.8
	21-22 years old	173	43.2
	23-24 years old	124	31
Gender	Male	153	38.3
	Female	210	52.5
	LGBTQIA+	37	9.3
Education Level	Highschool Graduate	69	17.3
	College Graduate	117	29.3
	Under Graduate	214	53.5
Monthly Income	P5,000-P10,00	236	59
	P11,000-P15,000	76	19
	P16,000-P20,000	88	22
Occupation/Student Status	Student	268	67
	Employed	110	27.5
	Unemployed	22	5.5

In terms of age, most respondents were 21–22 years old (43.2%), followed by those aged 23–24 years (31.0%), while 25.8% belonged to the 18–20 age group, suggesting that the sample was largely composed of young adults who are actively transitioning into independent consumption and decision-making. With respect to gender, female respondents comprised the largest proportion (52.5%), followed by male respondents (38.3%), while 9.3% identified as LGBTQIA+, reflecting gender diversity within the sample and indicating inclusivity in respondent representation.

In terms of educational attainment, more than half of the respondents were undergraduates (53.5%), while 29.3% were college graduates and 17.3% were high school graduates, suggesting that most participants were still engaged in higher education, a context often associated with heightened exposure to digital media and contemporary consumption trends. Regarding monthly income, a substantial proportion of respondents reported earnings within the ₱5,000–₱10,000 range (59.0%), followed by ₱16,000–₱20,000

(22.0%) and ₱11,000–₱15,000 (19.0%), indicating generally modest income levels that may influence price-sensitive purchasing behaviors such as dupe consumption.

Lastly, in terms of occupation or student status, the majority were students (67.0%), while 27.5% were employed and 5.5% were unemployed, reinforcing the characterization of the sample as predominantly young consumers with limited or emerging earning capacity.

D. Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical guidelines to safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from each respondent after they were provided with clear and sufficient information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their voluntary participation. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to decline or withdraw from the study at any point without any form of penalty, thereby ensuring that participation was based on free and informed decision-making.

To uphold confidentiality and anonymity, no personally identifiable information was collected during the survey administration. Respondents were assured that all data would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes. Collected data were securely stored and accessible only to the researchers, minimizing the risk of unauthorized access or misuse.

E. Data Collection Tool and Procedures

The primary data collection tool for this study was a structured, closed-ended, researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 45 items, developed to obtain quantitative data from Generation Z respondents in Metro Manila. The instrument was grounded in established theories of ethical decision-making, consumer behavior, and intellectual property awareness to ensure conceptual alignment with the study's objectives. It comprised sections on demographic characteristics, intellectual property awareness, ethical perceptions toward dupe products, and consumer-related influencing factors. Each construct was measured using multiple Likert-type items rated on a 4-point response format. The use of a 4-point scale was intended to eliminate a neutral midpoint and encourage respondents to express a clear evaluative stance, thereby improving response discrimination and interpretability. Item responses were subsequently aggregated to form composite Likert scales representing the study constructs for analysis.

To establish content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by five experts, including field specialists, academicians, and a statistician, whose feedback informed revisions to enhance clarity, relevance, and construct representation. The instrument was then pilot-tested with 35 respondents sharing similar characteristics with the target population. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.891, indicating high internal consistency of

the aggregated scales. Before survey administration, an initial screening interview was conducted to confirm respondents' eligibility based on age, residence, and prior experience with dupe products. The finalized questionnaire was administered online through Google Forms, ensuring accessibility and efficient distribution. Data collection was conducted over a two-month period, during which responses were systematically gathered to meet the required sample size while maintaining data quality and consistency.

F. Statistical Tools Used

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed to analyze the data and address the objectives of the study. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of intellectual property awareness, ethical perceptions toward dupe products, and consumer-related influencing factors. The weighted mean provided an interpretable representation of respondents' overall perceptions for each construct, while the standard deviation indicated the degree of consensus in responses. To examine the relationship between intellectual property awareness and ethical perceptions, Kendall's tau correlation was employed, given the ordinal nature of Likert-type data and the absence of strict normality assumptions. In addition, the use of non-parametric correlation analysis complemented the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach adopted in the study, as PLS-SEM does not require multivariate normality and is well-suited for exploratory models involving latent constructs and moderation effects. All data processing and preliminary analyses were conducted using the subscription version of SPSS, while model estimation and hypothesis testing under the PLS-SEM framework were performed using SmartPLS.

Results and Discussions

A. On the Consumer-Related Factors Influencing the Generation Z's Ethical Perceptions Regarding Dupe Products

The results presented in Table 2 address the research objective on the factors that influence the ethical perceptions of Generation Z regarding duped products.

Table 2. Consumer-related factors influencing Generation Z's ethical perceptions of duped products (n = 400)

Category	Categorical Weighted Mean	Categorical SD	Description
Social and Cultural Influence	3.01	.810	Agree
Personal Moral Beliefs and Values	3.33	.640	Agree
Perceived Economic Value and Accessibility	3.26	.700	Agree
Grand Mean/SD	3.20	.717	Agree

Note: 1.00 to 1.49 – Strongly Disagree; 1.50 to 2.49 – Disagree; 2.50 to 3.49 – Agree; 3.50 to 4.00 – Strongly Agree; SD – Standard Deviation

The findings indicate that consumer-related factors play a meaningful role, as reflected by a grand weighted mean of 3.20 (SD = .720), interpreted as Agree. Among the factors examined, personal moral beliefs and values emerged as the most influential, obtaining the highest categorical mean (WM = 3.33, SD = .640). This suggests that Generation Z's ethical perceptions toward duped products are largely shaped by internal moral standards and individual judgments about right and wrong, highlighting the role of personal ethics in consumption decisions. This pattern reflects broader empirical evidence showing that ethical awareness among young consumers often coexists with cost–benefit considerations, where personal ethics influence judgment but do not always override price sensitivity and accessibility in consumption choices [21].

B. On Generation Z's Ethical Perceptions Toward Purchasing and Using Dupe Products

The results presented in Table 3 provide clear insight into the common ethical perceptions of Generation Z toward purchasing and using dupe products. The findings indicate that respondents hold an affirmative ethical position, as reflected by a grand weighted mean of 3.20 (SD = .698), interpreted as "Agree." Among the categories examined, Perception of Harm/Benefit to Original Creators registered the highest categorical mean (WM = 3.27, SD = .687), suggesting that Generation Z generally recognizes that dupe products may adversely affect original creators and brands. This awareness reflects an ethical sensitivity to the economic and creative implications of imitation products, even as such recognition does not necessarily deter dupe consumption.

Table 3. Respondents' ethical perceptions of dupe products (n = 400)

Category	Categorical Weighted Mean	Categorical SD	Description
Moral Reasoning and Justification	3.17	.703	Agree
Perception of Harm/Benefit to Original Creators	3.27	.687	Agree
Influence on Ethical Decision-Making	3.15	.703	Agree
Grand Mean/SD	3.20	.698	Agree

Note: 1.00 to 1.49 – Strongly Disagree; 1.50 to 2.49 – Disagree; 2.50 to 3.49 – Agree; 3.50 to 4.00 – Strongly Agree; SD – Standard Deviation

These findings suggest that Generation Z exhibits a level of ethical awareness characterized by acknowledgment of harm and legality alongside rationalizations that moderate ethical resistance. This perspective aligns with observations that young consumers are increasingly conscious of the negative impacts of counterfeit and imitation goods on creators and businesses, yet often struggle to fully internalize the broader emotional and psychological consequences of such practices, highlighting the need for more targeted ethical education initiatives [22].

C. On the Significant Relationship Consumer-Related Influencing Factors and Ethical Perceptions of Generation Z Concerning Dupe Products

The results presented in Table 4 address the research question of whether there is a significant relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and the ethical perceptions of Generation Z regarding duped products. Using Kendall's tau correlation**,** the findings reveal statistically significant positive relationships between all examined consumer-related factors and ethical perceptions, with correlation coefficients ranging from $\tau = 0.425$ to $\tau = 0.600$, all significant at $p < .001$.

Among the factors, social and cultural influence demonstrated the strongest associations, particularly with ethical decision-making ($\tau = .600$), followed by perceptions of harm or benefit to original creators ($\tau = .500$) and moral reasoning and justification ($\tau = .491$). These results suggest that peer norms, cultural expectations, and socially shared values play a dominant role in shaping how Generation Z evaluates the ethical acceptability of duped products, especially when making actual consumption decisions.

Table 4. Correlation analysis on consumer-related influencing factors vs. ethical perceptions

		Consumer-Related Influencing Factors		
		Social and Cultural Influence	Personal Moral Beliefs and Values	Perceived Economic Value and Accessibility
Ethical Perceptions	Moral Reasoning and Justification	.491***	.476***	.485***
	Perceptions of Harm/Benefit to Original Creators	.500***	.497***	.500***
	Influence on Ethical Decision-Making	.600***	.425***	.473***

*Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

In comparison, personal moral beliefs and values also exhibited significant relationships with ethical perceptions, most notably with perceptions of harm or benefit to original creators ($\tau = .497$) and moral reasoning and justification ($\tau = .476$), indicating that internal ethical standards contribute meaningfully to ethical awareness, though to a slightly lesser extent than social influence. Meanwhile, perceived economic value and accessibility showed consistently significant correlations across all ethical dimensions, particularly with perceptions of harm or benefit to original creators ($\tau = .500$) and moral reasoning ($\tau = .485$), highlighting the role of affordability and practicality in moderating ethical judgments. Overall, these findings indicate a clear and significant relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and ethical perceptions, with social and cultural influence emerging as the strongest determinant, followed by personal moral values and economic considerations. This pattern reflects broader empirical evidence suggesting that Generation Z's ethical evaluations of imitation or dupe products are strongly shaped by socially reinforced norms and perceived

acceptability, often interacting with individual moral reasoning and cost–benefit considerations in ethically ambiguous consumption contexts [6].

D. On Generation Z's Level of Awareness on IP Rights Concerning Dupe Products

The results presented in Table 5 indicate that Generation Z is generally "aware" of intellectual property (IP) rights concerning dupe products. In general, the respondents' awareness level yielded a grand weighted mean of 3.42 (SD = .590). Among the specific dimensions, Perceived Importance of IP rights obtained the highest weighted mean score (WM = 3.51, SD = .550), corresponding to "Very Aware," suggesting that Generation Z strongly recognizes the significance of IP rights in relation to duplicate products. This indicates that respondents clearly understand the role of IP protection in safeguarding original creators and promoting fairness in the marketplace. The relatively moderate standard deviation values across the indicators further suggest a reasonable level of consistency in respondents' awareness.

Table 5. Respondents' ethical perceptions of dupe products (n = 400)

Category	Categorical Weighted Mean	Categorical SD	Description
Exposure to Information	3.34	.640	Aware
Perceived Importance	3.51	.550	Very Aware
Legal Implications of Violations	3.42	.581	Aware
Grand Mean/SD	3.42	.590	Aware

Note: 1.00 to 1.49 – Not at all Aware; 1.50 to 2.49 – Slightly Aware; 2.50 to 3.49 – Aware; 3.50 to 4.00 – Very Aware; SD – Standard Deviation

These findings are consistent with national evidence reported by the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, which emphasized that Filipino youth increasingly acknowledge the importance of IP rights in fostering innovation, ethical business practices, and the protection of intellectual creations, while also highlighting the continuing need for awareness initiatives to deepen legal and practical understanding of IP rights [23]. The results suggest that while Generation Z is generally aware of IP rights concerning dupe products, there remains room to strengthen their understanding, particularly in translating perceived importance into deeper legal awareness and ethical consumer behavior.

E. On the Significant Relationship Between Consumer-Related Influencing Factors and IP Awareness of Generation Z on Dupe Products

Table 6 illustrates the correlation analysis examining the relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and intellectual property (IP) awareness of Generation Z regarding dupe products using the Kendall tau correlation coefficient.

The results reveal that all examined consumer-related factors—social and cultural influence**,** personal moral beliefs and values**,** and perceived economic value and accessibility—are positively and statistically significantly associated with the three dimensions of IP

awareness. Specifically, exposure to information on IP rights shows significant correlations with social and cultural influence ($\tau = .483$, $p < .001$), personal moral beliefs and values ($\tau = .428$, $p < .001$), and perceived economic value and accessibility ($\tau = .545$, $p < .01$). This indicates that Generation Z individuals who are more economically conscious, socially influenced, and morally reflective are more likely to encounter and engage with information related to intellectual property issues.

Table 6. Correlation analysis on consumer-related influencing factors vs. ethical perceptions

		Consumer-Related Influencing Factors		
		Social and Cultural Influence	Personal Moral Beliefs and Values	Perceived Economic Value and Accessibility
Intellectual Property Awareness	Exposure to Information	.483***	.428***	.545**
	Perceived Importance	.374***	.418***	.522***
	Legal Implications of Violations	.506***	.470***	.500***

*Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

In a similar pattern, perceived importance of IP rights demonstrates significant relationships with social and cultural influence ($\tau = .374$, $p < .001$), personal moral beliefs and values ($\tau = .418$, $p < .001$), and perceived economic value and accessibility ($\tau = .522$, $p < .001$), suggesting that consumer-related considerations meaningfully shape how IP protection is valued and internalized. Moreover, awareness of the legal implications of IP violations exhibits strong positive correlations with social and cultural influence ($\tau = .506$, $p < .001$), personal moral beliefs and values ($\tau = .470$, $p < .001$), and perceived economic value and accessibility ($\tau = .500$, $p < .001$), highlighting the role of moral orientation and economic reasoning in strengthening legal consciousness. Collectively, these findings affirm that consumer-related influencing factors are significantly associated with IP awareness among Generation Z**,** answering the research question in the affirmative. This relationship is supported by prior evidence indicating that consumer awareness of intellectual property develops through the interaction of moral values, social norms, and perceived economic benefits, particularly in markets where imitation and alternative products are prevalent [24].

F. On the Significant Relationship between IP Awareness and Ethical Perceptions of Generation Z Concerning Dupe Products

The results of the correlation analysis presented in Table 7 address the research objective of whether a significant relationship exists between intellectual property (IP) awareness and the ethical perceptions of Generation Z concerning duped products**.** Using Kendall's tau correlation, the findings show statistically significant and positive relationships between all

dimensions of IP awareness and ethical perceptions, with correlation coefficients ranging from $\tau = .371$ to $\tau = .560$, all significant at $p < .001$.

Table 7. Correlation analysis on intellectual property awareness vs. ethical perceptions

		Intellectual Property Awareness		
		Exposure to Information	Perceived Importance	Legal Implications of Violations
Ethical Perceptions	Moral Reasoning and Justification	.509***	.467***	.556***
	Perceptions of Harm/Benefit to Original Creators	.560***	.471***	.494***
	Influence on Ethical Decision-Making	.435***	.371***	.469***

*Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

Specifically, exposure to information on IP rights demonstrated strong positive associations with moral reasoning and justification ($\tau = .509$), perceptions of harm or benefit to original creators ($\tau = .560$), and ethical decision-making ($\tau = .435$), indicating that greater exposure to IP-related information is linked to heightened ethical sensitivity toward dupe consumption. Likewise, the perceived importance of IP rights was significantly related to moral reasoning ($\tau = .467$), perceptions of harm to creators ($\tau = .471$), and ethical decision-making ($\tau = .371$), suggesting that recognizing the value of IP protection reinforces ethical evaluations of dupe products. Awareness of the legal implications of IP violations yielded particularly strong associations with moral reasoning and justification ($\tau = .556$), followed by ethical decision-making ($\tau = .469$) and perceptions of harm to original creators ($\tau = .494$), underscoring the central role of legal awareness in shaping ethical judgments. Taken together, these results indicate a significant and consistent positive relationship between intellectual property awareness and ethical perceptions, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings align with evidence showing that increased awareness of IP protection mechanisms is associated with greater ethical sensitivity and more responsible decision-making regarding the use and respect of intellectual assets, highlighting the importance of IP education in promoting ethical consumer behavior [25].

G. On the Moderating Role of Consumer-Related Influencing Factors on the Relationship Between Generation Z's IP Awareness and Ethical Perceptions of Dupe Products

Table 8 presents the results of the construct reliability and convergent validity assessment for the latent variables included in the structural model. The findings indicate that all constructs meet the recommended criteria for reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .745 to.787, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, thereby

demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency among the indicators of Consumer-Related Influencing Factors, Ethical Perceptions, and Intellectual Property Awareness.

Table 8. Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Composite reliability	AVE
Consumer-Related Influencing Factors	.770	.772	.867	.685
Ethical Perceptions	.745	.749	.855	.663
Intellectual Property Awareness	.787	.790	.876	.702

Similarly, the reported composite reliability values, which ranged from .855 to .876, further confirm the reliability of the constructs, suggesting that the indicators consistently represent their respective latent variables.

In terms of convergent validity, all constructs achieved average variance extracted (AVE) values well above the minimum criterion of.50, with values ranging from .663 to .702. This indicates that a substantial proportion of the variance in the indicators is explained by their underlying constructs rather than by measurement error. These results demonstrate that the measurement model exhibits adequate reliability and convergent validity, supporting the appropriateness of the constructs for subsequent structural model analysis and hypothesis testing within the PLS-SEM framework. Table 9 presents the results of the discriminant validity assessment using the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Table 9. Discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Consumer-Related Influencing Factors	Ethical Perceptions	Intellectual Property Awareness
Consumer-Related Influencing Factors	.828		
Ethical Perceptions	.747	.814	
Intellectual Property Awareness	.688	.734	.838

As shown in the table, the diagonal values—representing the square roots of AVE—are .828 for Consumer-Related Influencing Factors, .814 for Ethical Perceptions, and .838 for Intellectual Property Awareness. Each of these values exceeds the corresponding inter-construct correlations reported in the same rows and columns, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other latent variables. Specifically, although Consumer-Related Influencing Factors show substantial correlations with Ethical Perceptions (.747) and Intellectual Property Awareness (.688), these values remain lower than the construct's square root of AVE. A similar pattern is observed for Ethical Perceptions and Intellectual Property Awareness, confirming that the constructs are empirically distinct. Overall, the results demonstrate that discriminant validity is satisfactorily established, supporting the adequacy of the measurement model and confirming that the constructs

capture conceptually different aspects of Generation Z's ethical perceptions, intellectual property awareness, and consumer-related influencing factors within the PLS-SEM framework.

Table 10 conveys the structural path estimates examining the relationships among consumer-related influencing factors, intellectual property awareness, and ethical perceptions of Generation Z toward duped products. The significance of the path coefficients was assessed using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, which is consistent with recommended practices in PLS-SEM for estimating standard errors, t-values, and confidence intervals.

Table 10. Structural path estimates

	β	**SD**	**t**	**Sig.**	**95% C.I.**	
					U	**L**
Consumer-Related Influencing Factors -> Ethical Perceptions	.460	.046	10.121	< .001	.373	.551
Consumer-Related Influencing Factors -> Intellectual Property Awareness	.688	.031	22.347	< .001	.628	.747
Intellectual Property Awareness -> Ethical Perceptions	.417	.048	8.751	< .001	.322	.507

The results indicate that consumer-related influencing factors have a significant and positive direct effect on ethical perceptions (β = .460, SD = .046, t = 10.121, p < .001), with the 95% confidence interval ranging from .373 to .551, confirming that factors such as perceived economic value, personal moral beliefs, and social and cultural influences directly shape ethical judgments regarding dupe consumption. In addition, consumer-related influencing factors significantly predict intellectual property awareness (β = .688, SD = .031, t = 22.347, p < .001), with a narrow confidence interval (.628 to .747), indicating a strong and stable relationship. This finding suggests that Generation Z's awareness of intellectual property rights is largely influenced by their economic considerations, moral orientations, and social environments. Moreover, intellectual property awareness exerts a significant positive effect on ethical perceptions (β = .417, SD = .048, t = 8.751, p < .001), with a 95% confidence interval of .322 to .507, demonstrating that higher levels of IP awareness contribute to stronger ethical evaluations of dupe products. Table 11 presents the results of the specific indirect effect analysis, examining the mediating role of intellectual property awareness in the relationship between consumer-related influencing factors and ethical perceptions of Generation Z toward duped products.

The mediating role of intellectual property awareness further strengthens the explanatory power of CDT, which posits that individuals experience psychological discomfort when their actions conflict with their beliefs or knowledge.

Table 11. Specific indirect paths (mediation)

	β	SD	t	Sig.	95% C.I.	
					U	L
Consumer-Related Influencing Factors -> Intellectual Property Awareness -> Ethical Perceptions	.287	.035	8.285	< .001	.221	.356

The significant path from intellectual property awareness to ethical perceptions suggests that increased awareness of IP rights—particularly legal implications and perceived importance—heightens ethical sensitivity toward dupe consumption. However, the persistence of a strong direct effect from consumer-related factors to ethical perceptions alongside a significant indirect effect through IP awareness (β = .287, t = 8.285, p < .001) indicates partial mediation, consistent with CDT's assertion that individuals often resolve dissonance through rationalization rather than behavioral change. In this context, Generation Z may recognize the ethical and legal issues associated with duped products, yet still justify their consumption by emphasizing economic constraints or social normalization, thereby reducing cognitive discomfort without fully abandoning the behavior.

The model also demonstrates substantial explanatory power, as shown in Fig. 2. The R^2 value of 0.750 for ethical perceptions indicates that 75% of the variance in ethical perceptions is explained by intellectual property awareness and consumer-related influencing factors, representing a very strong level of explanatory capacity in behavioral research. Meanwhile, the R^2 value of 0.475 for intellectual property awareness reflects moderate explanatory power, suggesting that consumer-related factors meaningfully account for awareness formation.

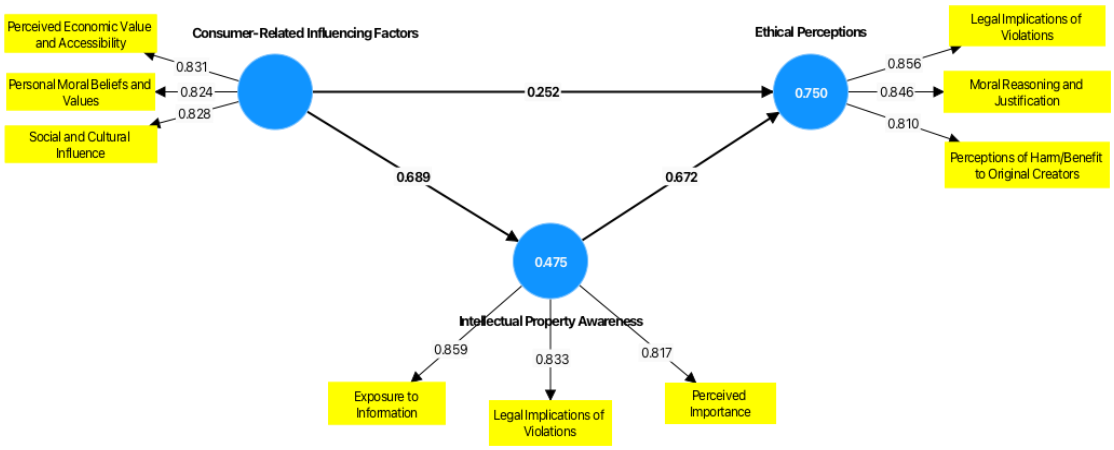


Fig. 2. PLS-SEM structural model

The findings suggest that ethical perceptions toward duped products among Generation Z emerge from a dynamic interaction between consumer-driven reasoning processes and cognitive evaluations of legal and ethical consequences**.** While intellectual property awareness plays a crucial role in strengthening ethical judgment, it does not fully

override the influence of economic practicality and social acceptance. This theoretical integration highlights why Generation Z may simultaneously express ethical concern and continue engaging in duped consumption, offering important implications for IP education, ethical marketing strategies, and policy interventions aimed at fostering more responsible consumer behavior. These patterns mirror the broader consumer behavior dynamics noted in research examining morally ambiguous product choices, where external influences and internal value systems jointly moderate ethical evaluation and purchase intention [25].

Conclusion

This study examined the ethical perceptions of Generation Z toward duped products by integrating consumer-related influencing factors**,** intellectual property (IP) awareness, and ethical perceptions within a mediated structural framework. Addressing a gap in the literature that has often treated ethical consumption and IP awareness as isolated constructs, the findings demonstrate that ethical perceptions toward dupe products are shaped through a dynamic interaction of economic considerations, personal moral values, social influences, and awareness of IP rights. The results confirm that consumer-related influencing factors significantly affect ethical perceptions both directly and indirectly through IP awareness, highlighting the importance of considering contextual and cognitive mechanisms in understanding ethically ambiguous consumption behaviors. As expected, factors such as perceived economic value, moral beliefs, and social norms played a significant role in shaping ethical judgments, while intellectual property awareness emerged as a key mechanism that strengthened ethical reasoning by linking consumer motivations to legal and ethical considerations.

Unexpectedly, the findings revealed that intellectual property awareness did not fully override the influence of consumer-related factors, but instead functioned as a partial mediator, suggesting that increased awareness alone may not be sufficient to deter ethically questionable consumption. This pattern aligns with Behavioral Reasoning Theory, which posits that ethical judgments are grounded in individuals' practical reasons, values, and social contexts, and with Cognitive Dissonance Theory, which explains how individuals reconcile conflicting beliefs and behaviors through rationalization rather than behavioral change. Together, these theories help explain why Generation Z may acknowledge the ethical and legal concerns associated with duped products while still justifying their consumption based on affordability, accessibility, or social acceptability.

The study contributes to the literature by empirically demonstrating how consumer-related factors and IP awareness jointly shape ethical perceptions in a Generation Z context, offering a more nuanced understanding of ethical consumption in markets characterized by imitation and duped products. However, the study is not without limitations. Its cross-sectional

design limits causal inference, and reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias. Additionally, the focus on Generation Z consumers within a specific geographic context may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research may address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs, expanding the demographic scope to include other generational cohorts, or exploring additional moderating variables such as brand loyalty, regulatory enforcement, or digital media exposure. Further investigation into intervention-based approaches, such as targeted IP education or ethical consumption campaigns, may also provide valuable insights into how ethical awareness can be more effectively translated into responsible consumer behavior.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of integrating theoretical perspectives and contextual factors in understanding ethical perceptions of duped products, offering implications for educators, policymakers, and businesses seeking to promote ethical consumption and intellectual property respect among Generation Z.

Limitations and Suggestions

Despite the contributions of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of a cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships among consumer-related influencing factors, intellectual property awareness, and ethical perceptions; future studies may employ longitudinal or experimental designs to better capture changes in ethical reasoning over time. Second, the study relied on self-reported survey data, which may be subject to social desirability or response bias, particularly when assessing ethically sensitive issues such as duped product consumption; incorporating qualitative methods or behavioral measures could provide deeper and more nuanced insights. Third, the focus on Generation Z respondents within a specific geographic context limits the generalizability of the findings to other generational cohorts or cultural settings; subsequent research may extend the model to different age groups, regions, or cross-cultural contexts to enhance external validity. Additionally, while the study examined key consumer-related factors, other potentially relevant variables—such as brand attachment, regulatory enforcement perceptions, or digital media influence—were not included and may be explored in future models. Addressing these limitations can help refine the understanding of ethical consumption and strengthen the applicability of findings related to intellectual property awareness and duping product behavior.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

References

[1] Y. Purwati and A. Widodo, "The customer journey in purchasing counterfeit fashion among Generation Z," *Jurnal Nusantara Aplikasi Manajemen Bisnis*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 254–266, 2025, doi: 10.29407/nusamba.v10i1.22511.

[2] R. A. Bulante, J. M. Catalan, N. G. L. Miranda, D. T. Torres, and J. S. Sabaulan, "The consumer behavior of Generation Z: An impact on modern marketing innovations," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, vol. 9, no. 14, pp. 950–979, 2025, doi: 10.47772/IJRISS.2025.914MG0074.

[3] S. Chandra and P. Gupta, "Dupe culture and digital deception: Legal challenges of trademark dilution in influencer-driven comparative advertising," *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 1–19, 2025, doi: 10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i04.54448.

[4] Q. ZhiYu, "Exploring the influence of consumer perception, social norms, and face consciousness on Generation Z's willingness to purchase counterfeit luxury goods," *Journal of Digitainability, Realism & Mastery (DREAM)*, vol. 3, no. 8, pp. 1–20, 2024, doi: 10.56982/dream.v3i08.262.

[5] E. Djafarova and S. Foots, "Exploring ethical consumption of Generation Z: Theory of planned behaviour," *Young Consumers*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 413–431, 2022, doi: 10.1108/YC-10-2021-1405.

[6] A. Halibas, U. Akram, A.-P. Hoang, and M. D. T. Hoang, "Unveiling the future of responsible, sustainable, and ethical consumption: A bibliometric study on Gen Z and young consumers," *Young Consumers*, vol. 26, no. 7, pp. 142–171, 2025, doi: 10.1108/YC-11-2024-2327.

[7] W. Wojdyla and T. Chi, "Decoding the fashion quotient: An empirical study of key factors influencing U.S. Generation Z's purchase intention toward fast fashion," *Sustainability*, vol. 16, no. 12, Art. no. 5116, 2024, doi: 10.3390/su16125116.

[8] Q. ZhiYu, "A study on the influence of consumer perception, norm and face consciousness on the willingness to purchase counterfeit luxury goods: A case of Generation Z," *Journal of Digitainability, Realism & Mastery (DREAM)*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 1–9, 2024, doi: 10.56982/dream.v3i04.223.

[9] A. Raj and D. Panwar, "A study on the effectiveness of influencer marketing on Gen Z purchase decisions," *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, vol. 6, no. 5, pp. 5725–5732, 2025, doi: 10.55248/gengpi.6.0525.1768.

[10] P. E. Chaudhry, "Dupe influencers exploiting social media to peddle luxury fakes," *Business Horizons*, vol. 65, no. 6, pp. 719–727, 2022, doi: 10.1016/j.bushor.2022.07.005.

[11] A. Mishra and A. Siby, "The impact of replicas and first-copy products on authentic products: An exploration in the apparel industry," *International Research Journal on Advanced Engineering and Management*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2024, doi: 10.47392/IRJAEM.2024.0142.

[12] R. A. Nursafira, V. Nathania, R. Handoko, and A. Budiman, "Why do people buy dupe cosmetics?" *Kajian Branding Indonesia*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 71–85, 2024, doi: 10.21632/kbi.6.1.71-85.

[13] M. Toukabri and A. Shili, "Consumer trust, confidence, and price sensitivity: Drivers of engaged consumption in ethical markets," *International Journal of Religion*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 207–219, 2025, doi: 10.61707/8gesdk12.

[14] S. L. T. Mouritzen, V. Penttinen and S. Pedersen, "Virtual influencer marketing: The good, the bad and the unreal," *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 410–440, 2024, doi: 10.1108/EJM-12-2022-0915.

[15] I. U. Hewapathirana and N. Perera, "Navigating the age of AI influence: A systematic literature review of trust, engagement, efficacy and ethical concerns of virtual influencers in social media," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*, vol. 8, no. 8, Art. no. 6352, 2024, doi: 10.24294/jipd.v8i8.6352.

[16] B. Lei, Y. Chang, W. Liu, and S. Shi, "IP, limited release and premium consumption: Evidence from Generation Z," *Kybernetes*, vol. 54, no. 10, pp. 5676–5699, 2024, doi: 10.1108/K-11-2023-2385.

[17] N. Malllick, "Intellectual property rights in the digital age: Issues and solutions," *International Journal of Advanced Research*, vol. 13, no. 5, pp. 1089–1095, 2025, doi: 10.21474/IJAR01/20997.

[18] A. Moudgil, "Evaluation of awareness about intellectual property rights," *Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 109–117, 2025, doi: 10.31305/rrijm.2025.v10.n3.013.

[19] R. Sheokand, "Safeguarding innovation in the digital age: The role of intellectual property rights in the emerging digital economy," *International Journal for Research Publication and Seminar*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2025, doi: 10.36676/irps.v16.i2.273.

[20] J. F. Hair, G. T. M. Hult, C. M. Ringle, M. Sarstedt, N. P. Danks, and S. Ray, *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R*, Springer, 2021, doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7.
[21] M. Mazli, "The impact of consumer ethics on intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products," *Information Management and Business Review*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 761–769, 2024, doi: 10.22610/imbr.v16i3S(I)a.4165.
[22] M. Hariharan and S. Saikrishnan, "A study on consumer perception and level of satisfaction on counterfeit products: Special reference to lifestyle products," *International Scientific Journal of Engineering and Management*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2025, doi: 10.55041/isjem02676.
[23] F. F. Balahadia, R. R. Fiscal, J. N. Olayta, M. C. Pablo, M. R. Valmote, and J. A. C. Ganibo, "University students' awareness on intellectual property rights," *International Journal of Academe and Industry Research*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2022, doi: 10.53378/352910.
[24] S. Kim and J. E. Ha-Brookshire, "The role of intellectual property right morality and affordability in consumers' legally copied product purchase decision-making," *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings*, vol. 80, no. 1, 2024, doi: 10.31274/itaa.17452.
[25] P. Vimalnath, F. Tietze, E. Eppinger, A. Jain, A. Gurtoo, and M. Elsen, "Responsible intellectual property strategy for sustainability transition: An exploratory study," *World Patent Information*, vol. 73, Art. no. 102195, 2023, doi: 10.1016/j.wpi.2023.102195.

Authors



Dr. Rolando B. Magat, Jr. is a faculty member at the University of Perpetual Help Dalta System, Philippines. His research focuses on business ethics, intellectual property awareness, consumer behavior, and digital commerce. He has supervised undergraduate research on emerging market ethics and youth consumption patterns. His academic interests include ethical decision-making, innovation management, and entrepreneurship education. (email: rolandomagat1018@gmail.com).



Arahvela Dungog is an undergraduate researcher at the University of Perpetual Help Dalta System, Las Piñas City, Philippines. She graduated with academic excellence and has received recognition in digital design competitions. She has experience leading university marketing initiatives and evaluating campaign performance using data-driven approaches. Her strengths include integrating strategic insight with creativity to produce impactful outcomes. (email: a.dungog@gmail.com).



Laurence A. Castillo is a business student at the University of Perpetual Help Dalta System, Las Piñas City, Philippines. His research interests include consumer ethics, intellectual property protection, and behavior in digital marketplaces. He has contributed to projects exploring perceptions of imitation products and brand loyalty among Generation Z. He aims to pursue a career in business research and policy development in today's economies. (email: lauranceaca@gmail.com).



Alyssa Kyla V. Cimacio is a BSBA Marketing Management graduate (Magna Cum Laude) from the University of Perpetual Help Dalta System, Philippines. She is an Accredited Marketing Professional and currently serves as a Business Relationship Officer at RCBC. Her interests include marketing research, brand development, consumer engagement, and ethical business practices. She is committed to advancing transparent, data-driven marketing strategies in digital and global financial environments. (email: alyssa.kyla@gmail.com).



Ronafel C. De Los Reyes is a business student at the University of Perpetual Help Dalta System, Las Piñas City, Philippines. Her interests include consumer protection, decision-making, and intellectual property awareness. She has participated in collaborative studies on counterfeit products and youth attitudes toward brand authenticity. Her goal is to advance research and promote responsible consumer behavior through education, policy support, and evidence-based strategies in local and international business environments. (email: ronafel.reyes@gmail.com).